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ABSTRACT

This study determined if the use of visual imagery and verbal rehearsal would benefit readers who had third or fourth grade reading level ability. Readily available trade materials were used each totalling approximately 400 to 600 words in length and containing novel content to eliminate the possibility of prior knowledge. The study used the knowledge that students already possessed about video camera-recorders and the various functions of the camera-recorder: record, rewind, and playback. The measure of learning was the change in percentage correct in scores from baseline tests to posttests of 3 boys in grades 4 and 5. A multiple baseline time-series design determined that the study strategy improved students' reading comprehension scores. (GLR)

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Using Visual Imagery to Help Chapter 1 Students Improve Comprehension

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Three fourth and fifth grade remedial reading students were taught a reading comprehension strategy using visual imagery and verbal rehearsal by self-questioning. These participants in a case study used readily available trade materials at ability level and grade placement level. The strategy utilized the knowledge that students already possessed about video camera-recorders and the various functions of the camcorders: record, rewind and playback. This technique gave them a new way to use visualization and verbal rehearsal to help recall reading materials. A multiple baseline time-series design was used to determine that the strategy improved their reading comprehension scores.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

While visual imagery and verbal rehearsal have been the subject of extensive empirical research, most researchers recommended further study to (a) discover the most effective educational approaches and (b) identify the ability groups and age levels most likely to benefit from these strategies. This study was an attempt to find if use of these strategies would benefit readers who had reading ability levels at third or fourth grade.

METHOD

The subjects in this time-series, unit repetitive, experimental design were three boys in grades four and five who were members of the same Chapter 1 remedial reading class. The subjects were given six baseline passages and tests (three at ability level and three at grade level) before being trained in a comprehension strategy of visual imagery and verbal rehearsal by self-questioning. There were six passages and posttests given at the end of the training. All instruments were matched according to ability and grade levels throughout.

Materials consisted of two sets of reading materials selected from several workbooks. Readability was determined

by using materials that were grade specific. The passages were approximately 400 to 600 words long and contained novel content to eliminate the possibility of prior knowledge. The passages were either non-fiction prose form or expository (science) materials.

The method of training used the "Learning to Visualize" and the self-questioning sheets developed by the researcher. Each subject was told to pretend to be a video camera recorder and RECORD the reading. The PLAYBACK feature was to be used at the end of each paragraph. The word "visualize" was used to mean PLAYBACK and was used interchangeably. Playback meant to stop and review the recording in the mind by questioning and retelling.

The self-questioning technique used verbal rehearsal to help the subject form useful images as he read. Each subject was to ask and answer questions such as "What do you see? (Tell enough so someone else can see it, too.) "What is happening?" "How do things look at this time?" (What season is it? What time of day is it? Is there a specific date given?)

Directions for the baseline tests were that each subject do everything necessary to help him remember what he read. He was shown his scores (in percentages) of the baseline tests and told that he was going to learn a new strategy to help him improve his scores.

For the training sessions and subsequent posttests, the

"Learning to Visualize" (be a video camera) and the self-questioning strategies were used. Each subject was to either pretend that he was a TV reporter and the video camera was in his brain or he could visualize how he would want a scene if he were a movie director.

The training sessions consisted of modeling by the researcher and practice by the subjects of what they were "seeing" as they read. All sessions were 30 minutes in length and were held five days a week for six weeks.

With the exception of the passages from the science series which provided tests, the tests were teacher-made. They were designed to help students use RECORD by fixing the who, what, when, where and how questions in their minds.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measure of learning in this experiment was the change in percentage correct in scores from baseline tests to posttests. The test results for all three subjects showed improved in scores from baseline testing to posttesting in both ability level reading and grade level reading.

Attention to detail was noticeably improved in all subjects However, the lack of pictures, purposely omitted, seemed to be a drawback for the bilingual student who didn't know the meaning of several key words.

The improvements at the more difficult grade level

could be explained by (a) mastery of the two strategies and (b) the fact that the ability level tests were done first allowing for more practice using the strategy.

LEARNING TO VISUALIZE

Pretend that you are a video-recorder. It's up to you to "get" as much information as you can on your "tape" since your report will be the one the "boss" will use for the morning report.

When your RECORD button is on, you must try to remember what you read. You can do this "recording" by making pictures in your mind. As you begin, stop at the end of each sentence and try to put yourself into the picture. What would you see? What is happening? Who would be there? Take note of the time of day, the season of the year, and the date. How would things look if it were 1789, or 1889, or 1989? Ask yourself, "Why is this happening important?" You record sound on your tape, too.

Your video-recorder also has a playback button. When the PLAY button is on, everything you've recorded will be there for you to see. The quality of your playback will depend on how well you use your RECORD BUTTON.

Read these articles carefully. When you come to the end of each sentence you will see a red mark over the ending punctuation. RECORD. When you get to the end of the paragraph, you will see a red star. PLAYBACK. Read carefully. Take time to ask yourself the questions so you get a good "recording".

NAME_____

STORY_____

These are things to remember as you use your RECORD button.

1. What do you see? Tell enough so someone else can see it, too.

2. What is happening?

3. Who is there?

4. What time is it?
   day of the week
   year
   season
   time of day

5. How do things look at this time? Give a lot of details.

6. Why is this happening important?

7. What do you think would happen next?